

32 PATHS



CHRISTMAS

THIRTY-TWO PATHS OF WISDOM

LESSON FIFTEEN

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH path of wisdom is that of the letter Peh, symbolized in Tarot by Key 16. It is the third reciprocal path on the Tree of Life, joining Netzach to Hod, the Sphere of Venus to the Sphere of Mercury, the field of desire to that of intellect. In Hebrew, its name, Exciting or Active Intelligence, is שָׁקֵל מוֹרָגָשׁ, saykel morawgash. The adjective is from a verbal root meaning "to be noisy, to be tumultuous, to rage."

In an earlier lesson of this series we called attention to the fact that Netzach, the Sphere of Venus, receives from Tiphareth an influence essentially Martian in quality, that of the sign Scorpio, descending through the twenty-fourth path. This influence, moreover, is the continuation of that which descends to Tiphareth from Geburah, the Sphere of Mars.

Thus we may assume that the twenty-seventh path, assigned in *The Book of Formation* to Mars, may be considered to partake of the nature of Geburah. It is as if the current descending from Geburah through Tiphareth to Netzach were reflected back to Hod through this path.

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

In TAROT FUNDAMENTALS, Lesson 36, we mentioned two ancient titles for Key 16. One is "The House of God" and the other "The Fire of Heaven." Their Hebrew originals, when analyzed by Gematria, yield some interesting information concerning the sixteenth Key and the twenty-seventh path of wisdom.

In Hebrew, the expression for "House of God" is בֵּית-הָאֱלֹהִים, Beth-ha-Elohim. Note that the first part of this phrase, Beth, is the name of the second Hebrew letter, corresponding to the twelfth path of wisdom, descending from the first to the third Sephirah. The second part is ha-Elohim, which adds to 91, the number ofamen, Amen, one of the special divine names for Kether; and the word Elohim itself is the divine name attributed to Binah.

The number of Beth-ha-Elohim is 503, and this is the value of the word גַּרְשָׁן, gawrash, of the phrase נַעֲלֵת-הַגְּרָשָׁן, and of the word גַּרְשָׁן, regash.

The first of these, as a verb pronounced gawrash, means "to drive, to thrust, to cast out, to expel, to put forth fruit." Every one of these meanings is directly related to the Mars-force attributed to Key 16 and the letter Peh. The symbol-

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

bolism of the Tower, with its falling figures and toppling crown, is in obvious agreement with all but the last of the meanings just given. When one remembers, however, that Mars presided over the fertility of fields and herds, and that the Mars-force is the active principle in reproduction, "to put forth fruit" is also understandable. What is more, the lightning-flash in Key 16 is a symbol of the manifestation of the whole Tree of Life, and of the descent of the Holy Influence, Mezla, through the thirty-two paths, whereby all things are brought into existence. Nor will students familiar with ancient myths be unaware that lightning was supposed by the Greeks to make fields fertile.

This is borne out by the fact that the tower has twenty-two courses, corresponding to the paths of the letters. Again, before the lightning struck it, this tower with its crown was a pretty obvious phallic symbol, so that it represented a delusion which is very closely associated with reproduction. This is the delusion of the genetic superiority of certain families, or of certain races.

This delusion has a great deal to do with war. Every family, every tribe, every nation entrapped by

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

this false belief sets great store by physical inheritance, and believes in its divine right to rule other families, tribes, or nations. The basic error of separateness is actually derived from man's feeling that he possesses a body which is his very own, surrounded by various things which are objects of his desires, and which he seeks also to "own," by hook or by crook.

As a noun, spelt with the same letters, but with vowel points which make its pronunciation geresh, the word we are considering signifies "a fruit, a product of the earth, produce." The letters of the word are clues to a deeper meaning. The first is Gimel, letter of the Moon. The second is Resh, letter of the Sun. The last is Shin, the alphabetical symbol of what Hindus call Prana, and of what the alchemists designate both as "their" Fire and "their" Quintessence. Thus the word is a symbol for Moon, Sun and Fire, and since it also means "a product of the earth," we may take it to be another symbol for that most precious fruit, the Stone of the Wise, compounded by Moon, Sun and Fire, from the elements composing the earth.

The phrase יְהִי־מְלֹא־מִדָּתָךְ, yekhavah-d'a'ath, means "showeth knowledge,"

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

and is from Psalm 19:2, "Night unto night sheweth knowledge." Note that night shows knowledge to night, while day utters speech to day. Thus the passage from which this phrase is taken is directly associated with the letter Peh, the mouth as the organ of speech.

Some ancient Tarot Keys show the lightning-bolt issuing from the mouth of a sun-disk with a human face, like that of the sun in Key 19. Furthermore, the first chapter of Genesis says "night" is the name for darkness, or for what the Tree of Life represents by the black hue of Binah the Mother. The womb of night brings forth the day, and there can be no question that the scene in Key 16 represents night. Night, moreover, is the time we associate with generation and conception; and the Hebrew word da'ath, knowledge, is known to mean often, if not primarily, what the Bible intimates when it says: "And Adam knew his wife, and she conceived."

Note, in passing, that the Hebrew verb יְדַעַת, yadah, "to know," has for its first two letters those which spell יָד, yad, "hand," and for its final letter Ayin, which means the human eye. To know is to apprehend, or touch, and to see. This is an excellent example of the

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

self-defining characteristic of many of the older Hebrew roots.

Finally, 503, the number of Beth-ha-Elohim, is that of rawgash, which means "to rage," or "to be violent." It signifies also "to come together, to assemble (as a mob)." This last meaning, though it applies more particularly to an angry, or even riotous, assemblage, is closely related to the Greek original for our word "church," for *ekklesia* means "an assembly, a congregation." Perhaps the connection is even closer than appears at first, for the history of religion makes it only too clear that churches have on many occasions been scenes of violence and of unseemly ebullitions of the mob spirit.

After all, what brings any group of persons into a church, or other assembly, is that they share common beliefs and feelings. There may be dissenting voices in a crowd, but the underlying quality of crowd consciousness is emotional unity. Thus it is not surprising, when we consider that the majority in any congregation are still caught in the delusion of separateness, to find that churches are not always wholly devoted to peaceful worship.

Everyone accustomed to dealing with crowds soon learns that unity

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

of feeling, rather than intellectual agreement, dominates such assemblages. The pitchman on a street corner, the orator at a political meeting, the evangelist in his pulpit, all employ the same principles of psychology. They resort to every device they know in order to bring about unity of feeling amongst their hearers. To the extent that they succeed in this, to that extent do they wield influence over the persons composing the crowd. That influence may wane when the company disperses, but for the time being it subdues the intelligence and the will of all who are caught in the emotional contagion of the group.

“House of God,” moreover, reminds us of a New Testament statement which was certainly familiar to the inventors of Tarot: “What, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that is within you, which you have received from God? (1 Corinthians, 6:19)” Thus we may regard the tower as being a symbol for the human body.

So it is, and it is made of clay bricks to emphasize this idea. What is more, the Hebrew word for brick is Levanah, and the same word means “Moon,” and is used by Qabalists to designate the ninth Sephirah, which they associate with the repro-

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

ductive organs of the Grand Man symbolized by the Tree of Life. The Grand Man, moreover, is both male and female, the Heavenly Androgyne.

The other ancient title for Key 16 is "The Fire of Heaven." In Hebrew this is אֵשׁ שָׁמָיִם, esh min-ha-shamaim. We find it in 2 Kings 1:10, where it certainly refers to lightning. Modern knowledge confirms the old esoteric doctrine that the Holy Influence is of the same nature as lightning. What else do we mean when we speak of the electrical constitution of matter? The old Qabalists knew this as well as do we, just as they knew the earth is a globe, circling round the sun, long before Copernicus.

The more esoteric meaning of esh min-ha-shamaim reveals itself when we notice that שָׁמָיִם, the second word in the phrase, is the same as the noun meaning "manna," the mysterious food of the Children of Israel, during their years of wandering in the wilderness. Furthermore, the number of this word is 90, and this is the value of the letter-name Mem, signifying water; and in Key 16, surely, we have a representation of the fall of fire and water from the heavens. This is our true source of sustenance, and to this the story of the manna refers.

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

Nor is this all. The "water" of the alchemists is fiery. Electricity is often described as being a fluid. The Mars-force and this electrical fluid are identical. Our physical bodies are electric machines, and physical existence is an electrical phenomenon. When we truly understand what it is that excites us, what makes us enter into pursuits designed to satisfy our desires, what, in consequence of such pursuits, increases our knowledge and unfolds our intellectual powers, then we shall understand the twenty-seventh path. In our enlightenment we shall see how subtly correct is every detail of the symbolism shown by Key 16.

Yet further, **הַשָּׁמַיִם**, ha-shamaim, the heavens, is the number 395, and in Hebrew this is the value of Neshamah, the name of the Divine Soul seated in Binah. The fire that overthrows our houses of delusion and separateness is, as the lessons on Key 16 in **TAROT FUNDAMENTALS** declare, the flash of inspiration coming down into our personal lives from the Divine Soul. The "heavens" which declare the glory of God are the interior heavens of Binah.

The lightning-flash, therefore, may be compared to the paths of the letters Cheth and Mem, descending

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

from Binah. Through the path of Cheth the Holy Influence descends from the Dark Mother, to be reflected in the Sphere of Mars, Geburah. From the Sphere of Mars the same influence descends through the path of Mem, to energize Hod, the Sphere of Mercury, which is also the terminus of the twenty-seventh path. If you will but look at these paths and the corresponding Keys, and let the meaning of the pictures take possession of your mind, you will know what they mean, better than we could explain in hundreds of pages.

The magical power attributed to the twenty-seventh path is thus described: "To foresee all future events which do not depend on a superior free will, or on an all undiscernible cause." The choice of words here is subtle. No event depends on any personal "superior free will," because all events depend on the One Will which finds expression through every living creature, and is, as the text concerning the path intimates, what excites every creature into action, and constitutes its essential life.

To the ignorant, this One Will seems to be an "all undiscernible cause," which they believe to be a "God," dwelling somewhere up in the skies, or behind the scenes of

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

the world, or even outside the universe altogether. The wise know the same God as an indwelling *Presence*. They cannot define in words what they know. Every system of theology falls to pieces like the Tower when a human being receives the light of direct knowledge.

Many persons may, and do, know God. More than this, as St. Paul says they know God exactly. Theirs is no vague guess, no dim, shadowy apprehension. It is full illumination, and the knowledge it brings carries with it power. Thus the truly wise are able to forecast the course of human events long before the unenlightened ever guess their trend or their outcome. This is what enabled the Brothers of the Rosy Cross to foresee the American Revolution, and lend their influence to the various movements which led to that great step forward in human liberation.

When the fire of inspiration from Neshamah illuminates a man, it destroys the delusion of personal autonomy and isolation. It gives both insight and foresight. Then we see truly what the SELF is, and what is the real meaning and purpose of human personality. We become members of the inner circle of humanity, dedicated to the service of

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

all, and by this dedication we join the company of hidden leaders and governors of the race, who are chief among men because they have no ambition for place or power, but devote themselves wholly to the cause of freedom.

The twenty-eighth path is that of the letter Tzaddi, symbolized by Key 17, the Star. It is the second path proceeding from Netzach, which it joins to Yesod, uniting the Sphere of Venus to that of the Moon, and the desire nature to the automatic consciousness. In Hebrew, its name, Natural Intelligence, is יְמִינֵדָתְּ כָּלָל, saykel motebah, derived from the root tawbah, which, as a verb, means "to press in, to impress, to sink," and, as a noun, is used in Rabbinical writings for "nature." Note the implication that nature is like the impression made on wax by a signet ring. Closely related is the occult doctrine that nature is impressed with characters written by the Hand of God. This is a figurative way of stating what is strictly true, that one needs only to pay close attention to events and things in order to read their meaning.

The correct Hebrew title for Key 17 is written **הכוכבים**, ha-kokabim, "The Stars," and for this reason some of the older French Tarot cards

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

name this Key *Les Etoiles*, instead of *L'Etoile*, while Italian packs of the same period call it *Le Stelle*, instead of *La Stella*.

Now, the word *kokab*, besides being the Hebrew generic term for any star, has special reference to the planet Mercury, which is so named in Qabalistic books, and in the later Rabbinical writings. Thus in Key 17 we see the bird of Hermes on the tree, to remind us that meditation, the activity pictured by the design, is under the direction of what Tarot pictures as the Magician.

Furthermore, *ha-kokabim* has very illuminating number correspondences. It adds to 103, and this is the value of אָדָם הַאֲדָם, *ehben ha-Adam*, the Stone of Adam; of בְּנֵי בּוֹנָאִים, *bonaim*, builders, masons, a name used by the Essenes, and adopted also by us as part of our official title; of גָּנוֹן, *gawnan*, to hedge about, protect, shield; of אֵלֹהִים הָאֵל, *Hu* (or *Hoa*) *ha-Elohim*, "He is God," (Deuteronomy 4: 38); of מִגְדָּד, *Megiddon*, rendezvous (the place of the battle of Armageddon, in the Apocalypse); and of מָגָנִי, *moganiy*, my shield (Psalm 119:114, in the section of that Psalm connected with the letter Samekh). Behind these words is some interesting occult doctrine, which bears on the topic of this lesson.

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

The Stone of Adam is a verbal symbol for the mystical union of the Father, Chokmah, with the Son, Tiphareth, in Adam, the sixth Sephirah. This is represented in the seventeenth Key by the great star surrounded by seven smaller stars.

True Bonaim, or Builders, are those who share the one secret doctrine. Historically, this was known to the Essenes, a monastic community living near the Dead Sea, at the beginning of the Christian Era. They stood in relation to Judaism in much the same way that religious devotees stand in relation to orthodox Hinduism, except that they lived in communal groups, sharing all things, like the early Christians. The Essenes, however, were not the sole custodians of the secret doctrine which has come down to us, nor do we share their views as to the necessity for celibacy.

The secret doctrine is practical, and it certainly has much to do with the occult power of the stars. Not in the superstitious sense which has debased the true esoteric astrology. Behind the Qabalah there is a deep science of the stars, and this is such as to afford more than adequate protection from every danger, this being implied by the verb ְלַל, gawan. Thus we find the Brothers of

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

the Rosy Cross writing: "He that is false-hearted, or only greedy of riches, the same first of all shall not be able in any manner of wise to hurt us, but bring himself to utter ruin and destruction. Also our building (this indicates that the Brothers thought of themselves as Bonaim, or Masons), although one hundred thousand people had very near seen and beheld the same, shall forever remain untouched, undestroyed, and hidden to the wicked world."

For the "building" is the secret place of the Most High. It is within the brain of the illuminated adept, and is what we call the "Adytum." In an unenlightened man it is in the same condition as the Temple at the time of David. The materials are gathered, but cannot be erected into a temple by David, the warrior and man of blood. They must wait for Solomon, whose name signifies "peaceful."

The myth of Solomon in the Old Testament has, no doubt, some historical basis, but what history there is has been so interwoven with allegory that to discover the actual man round whom the legend revolves is almost impossible. Thus occult doctrine everywhere makes Solomon a symbol for the rising sun, and the

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

very name solomon, in the Greek of the Septuagint, is compounded of the Latin *Sol*, the Sanskrit *Om*, and the Egyptian *On*, in the characteristic Qabalistic tradition of mixing words from different tongues. All three, and their combination, are symbols for the EGO in Tiphareth.

The Work of the Chariot, and the practices of alchemists, yogis, Essenes, and other practical occultists, are allegorized in Freemasonry as the building of Solomon's Temple. This, the Bible tells us, was built to, and in, the "Name Jehovah." Its inner shrine, where was placed the Ark of the Covenant on which rested the Shekinah, or Divine Presence, was a cubical room, itself pronouncing the Name by its very proportions, as we have shown in our explanations of the Cube of Space.

The Qabalistic commentary on this Name is *Hu ha-Elohim*, He is God. *Hu* designates *Kether*, and thus stands for the indivisible SELF, *Yekhidah*. *Ha-Elohim*, one of the special designations for *Binah*, relates also to *Kether*, because כָּנָךְ is the number 91, the value of *אָמֵן*, *Amen*, a name for the first Sephirah.

What is thus curiously veiled is the Absolute Unity. To say *Hu ha-Elohim* is to affirm the undivided

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

singleness of what appears to be manifold. For Elohim, being the Creative Name, and being related also to Binah, is a plural noun, signifying literally, "Creative Powers."

Even the first words of the Bible indicate clearly that "creation" is a separative process, inasmuch as the verb נָתַן, beraw, "created," means actually "to cut apart." Thus the process of manifestation brings about the appearance of manyness. Hence they who are deluded by the innumerable pairs of opposites are forever, like David, taking sides, and battling with the Goliaths of illusion. Caught in the web of delusion, they love and hate, suffering alternations of joy and grief, such as are reflected in the many moods of the Psalms ascribed to David. It does not matter whether or not he wrote them all--or even whether or not he wrote any of them. They embody the David consciousness, at its best and worst. This is the consciousness which has its flashes of inspiration, but is not fully liberated from the nightmare of belief in separateness.

Solomon is the type of complete enlightenment. His very name signifies "Perfected One." His father is David, "love," and his mother is Bath-Sheba, "Daughter of the

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

Seven,' whom David saw bathing in a garden, like the central figure in Key 17.

Bath-Sheba was the wife of אורייה, Uriah, and one has only to look at his name to see that it is a compound of אור, Aur, Light, with the Divine Name יה, Jah, especially attributed to Chokmah. Thus the husband of Bath-Sheba is the 'Light of Wisdom,' and to that Light her son Solomon turns for guidance.

The 'Seven' are the Seven Spirits of God, or the seven aspects of the One Being, symbolized in Key 17 by the smaller stars. Their name is the Divine Name assigned to Binah, Elohim. Yet these seven are in essence One, and this is the inner meaning of Hu ha-Elohim.

It is a meaning discoverable by none save those who meditate. For what we put into words, even of high and sacred esoteric origin, is not the unveiled truth a wise man knows. Truth at its profoundest goes beyond words. Thus the words of the wise may be on the lips of the unenlightened. Only meditation can plant the Seed of the Word in the heart. Then the Seed grows and bears fruit. This enables us to distinguish those who hear the Seed of the Word without planting it from those who, by

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

prolonged meditation, carry the Seed through the twenty-eighth path, down into the automatic level of consciousness, where it takes root and unfolds in the changed life and wonder-working powers of the "new creature." Thus it is written: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

We must come to Megiddon, the place of rendezvous, the place where we experience the peace of illumination during quiet meditation, after the storm and conflict of our early awakenings have passed. The literal meaning of *rendezvous* is "render yourself." The same root, *render*, is in "surrender." A man in meditation surrenders himself to the indwelling Shekinah who is the "Daughter of the Seven." He makes an appointment with Her. He seeks Her out, and to her faithful lover She unveils.

Read the Samekh section of the 119th Psalm, from which comes the word *moganiy*, "my shield." Every one of the eight verses begins, in the original, with the letter *Samekh*, and the first word of verse 116 is actually a verb formed from the root *סָמַךְ*, *Samekh*. Note particularly the opening phrase, "I hate vain thoughts." The original signifies, "I hate the empty reason-

THIRTY-TWO PATHS: 15

ings of divided opinions.' It is a key to success in meditation.

Then read the Tzaddi section of the same Psalm. The "enemies" mentioned in verse 139 typify forgetfulness. They are the distractions which must be overcome by faithful practice. He who enters into the spirit of this section of the Psalm, and lives in harmony with that spirit, is the true possessor of the twenty-eighth path. He is filled with the spirit of wisdom and counsel, so that by what he says and does he is able to manifest the ability to give efficacious consolations and wise counsels, even as we read concerning the possessor of this path of wisdom, in Eliphas Levi's old manuscript.

